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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Letter dated 29 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

It gives me pleasure to inform you that the Kingdom of Bahrain has announced its candidature for a seat in the Human Rights Council (2008-2011) in the elections to be held during the current session of the General Assembly, in May 2008.

This candidature is being submitted and pursued in expression of Bahrain's keen interest in the cause of human rights and the underlying values of human integrity and dignity, values that are proudly enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom, shared with a vibrant civil society and strictly observed in the practices, laws and procedures of the governmental machinery. The record of the Kingdom of Bahrain speaks for itself.

It is worth recalling here that the Kingdom of Bahrain, upon its election to the then nascent Council in 2006, served for a single year, its mandate being curtailed as a result of the drawing of lots. Bahrain now hopes and wishes to benefit from another opportunity to fully contribute to the work of the Council, of which it is a staunch supporter.

I attach hereto, for your perusal and records, an aide-memoire containing Bahrain's profile in matters related to human rights (see annex).

(*Signed*) Tawfeeq Ahmed **Almansoor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 February 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Aide-memoire

The Kingdom of Bahrain has decided to present its candidature for membership in the Human Rights Council of the United Nations in the elections to be held during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, in May 2008.

Since 1999, Bahrain has undergone a comprehensive process of reform, which has included political, economic and social development.

At the heart of this reform has been the concern to protect and promote the rights of Bahrain's citizens. Bahrain gives human rights the highest priorities in its domestic and foreign policy, and this is enshrined in and protected by the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain, which highlights human rights as key pillars for national development.

Bahrain is committed to the protection of human rights and freedoms. All national plans and programmes include, and will continue to contain, a human rights dimension, following the aforementioned human rights approach to development.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has committed itself to promoting and respecting human rights by signing the following agreements:

- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- Slavery Convention
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children
- Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air

Bahrain views transparency as essential when dealing with human rights issues. This is illustrated in the cooperation, methodology and thoroughness with which the Kingdom compiled the first universal periodic review, to be submitted to the Human Rights Council in February of 2008.

Bahrain firmly believes in supporting and strengthening civil society and its participation in the decision-making process. More than 368 non-governmental organizations have been established in Bahrain, inclusive of various human rights groups, among which is the Bahrain Human Rights Society, which has been active and taking part in Bahrain human rights issues.

The Supreme Council for Women, established in 2001, along with a number of non-governmental women's societies and organizations, are adopting innovative strategies for the political, social and economic advancement and empowerment of women. These bodies aim to achieve full participation of women in the workforce and equal allocation of leadership and decision-making positions for women in both the public and private sectors, hand in hand with raising awareness on the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women.

As part of its national strategy, Bahrain has hosted many seminars and workshops on human rights, and will continue to do so in the future on order to increase public awareness.

In 2005, Bahrain hosted the second session of the Forum for the Future, where, for the first time, civil society sat alongside G-8 and regional foreign ministers to discuss their views on major issues. The Forum resulted in the establishment of the Foundation for the Future and the Fund for the Future.

Cooperation between the Government and national and international NGOs has resulted in the implementation of training programmes for law enforcement officers on international principles of human rights.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has continued to contribute financially to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as to other programmes, on an ongoing basis. Such contributions are intended to strengthen the work of the Office and the implementation of its programmes. The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue such contributions where possible in the future.

Should it be elected to the Human Rights Council, the Kingdom of Bahrain will assist in the creation of a comprehensive international commitment for cooperation in human rights.

Through its membership, Bahrain will be committed to the principles of consultation and dialogue and cooperation with all United Nations Members in general and Human Rights Council members in particular, in a transparent and open manner, in order to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide.

Bahrain holds that human rights issues should be treated equally and in a just manner with cooperation to ensure national and international harmonization

between cultures, religions, civilizations and different historical backgrounds through respect, tolerance and solidarity.

The Kingdom of Bahrain will continue its cooperation and coordination with non-governmental organizations, which are considered genuine partners in developing the work of the Human Rights Council. Bahrain will also work with other key actors within the international community to develop and strengthen human rights through the implementation of human rights principles and standards enshrined in regional and international agreements.

Bahrain is committed to General Assembly resolution 60/251.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has initiated a major campaign to combat trafficking in persons, and an anti-human trafficking law was passed in early 2008.